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MY
PIRITUAL AEROPLANE

BY

UGUSTA E. STETSON, C.S.D.

William B. Cairns Collection
Of
American Women Writers
1650-1920

William B. Cairns
Professor of English
University of Wisconsin-Madison

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My Spiritual Aeroplane

By

Augusta E. Stetson, C.S.D.

Author of
"Reminiscences, Sermons, and Correspondence,"
"Vital Issues in Christian Science," etc.

G. P. Putnam's Sons
New York and London
The Knickerbocker Press
1921

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FOREWORD

Take heed therefore unto yourselves, and to all the flock, over the which the Holy Ghost hath made you overseers, to feed the church of God, which he hath purchased with his own blood.—Acts xx., 28.

THE day after *My Spiritual Aeroplane* was written, it was read at the rehearsal of The Oratorio Society of the New York City Christian Science Institute[1] at Carnegie Chamber Music Hall.

At the end of the reading, the members, two hundred and fifty in

[1]New York City Christian Science Institute, Incorporated, July, 1891.

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number, rose and sang: "The Lord is my strength and song, and is become my salvation. . . . I shall not die, but live, and declare the works of the Lord."[1] This was from the Dedicatory Anthem of First Church of Christ, Scientist, New York City, which was built by Mrs. Augusta E. Stetson, C.S.D., her students, and church members, and was dedicated November, 1903.

The reader will readily grasp that the Pilot of the aeroplane was the spiritual idea known to Christian Scientists as their great Leader, Mary Baker Eddy, from

[1] Psalm cxviii., 14, 17.

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whom, at Mrs. Eddy's request, Mrs. Stetson, in her journey from sense to Soul, has never been separated.

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My Spiritual Aeroplane

ESTERDAY, a dear student sent me an aeroplane.

I soliloquized, What use have I for this? I never have cared to fly in air. I am content with the automobile, or any method of conveyance which I have accepted and utilized. I recall, however, the fear which seized me, when I took my first ride in an automobile, and overcame that sensation with our dear Leader's words: "progress is the law of infinity."[1]

[1] *Miscellaneous Writings*, page 15.

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I retired at night with a sense of deep appreciation of the gift, and as I pondered on the subject, I seemed to be standing beside an aeroplane, when a man approached me.

I said to him: "This aeroplane has been sent to me, but I never have had the slightest desire to fly. I prefer to remain where I can see people and things—the trees and rivers, houses, birds, animals, and objects."

The man replied: "Who made the world and all things that are therein?"

I answered: "God."

He further questioned: "Did He

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make them like Himself, perfect, good, His own image?"

I replied: "Certainly. He is the only creator, Life and Love, and all objects are His work, and He governs all."

He continued: "*Is* every object in the universe God's work?"

I answered: "Yes, for all things, objects, are His thoughts expressed. I admit no other cause, no other creator, no other creation or universe."

The man said: "Then come with me," and he stepped towards the aeroplane.

I hesitated, when again he said: "Follow me, come!"

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I replied: "But would it not be better to take our trial flight in the morning? You see twilight is deepening, and there is no moon and there are no stars to light us!"

He looked at me as if surprised and asked: "Have you not read, 'God is light, and in Him is no darkness at all,'[1] and 'The night is as clear as the day,' and also 'At eventide it shall be light'?"

I was silent, and he again said: "Come!"

I lingered and asked: "Are you a professional aviator? I cannot trust to a novice. I should have a Pilot."

[1] 1 John i., 5.

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He asked again: "Is there more than one power, or God?"

Again I answered: "No."

Then he asked: "Does God govern His own universe or ideas?"

I answered: "Yes, but I should have a Pilot."

He paused for a moment and seemed grieved at my resistance to flying with him and asked quietly: "Have you ever read a poem in which are these words:

" 'And o'er earth's troubled, angry sea
I see Christ walk,
And come to me, and tenderly,
Divinely talk'?"

I said: "Yes, my beloved Leader

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and Teacher, Mary Baker Eddy, wrote those words. I have sung them for years."

The man declared: "And yet, your material senses are not *entirely* dissolved. The solvent of Love is necessary. Look through the lens of spiritual sense, and recall the words of Christ, so often repeated by you: 'Lo, I am with you alway.'[1]"

I said to him: "Perhaps I am not ready to take this flight. While soaring into space, will I not lose the objects which compose this city?"

He gazed at me reprovingly and asked: "Are you so satisfied with

[1] Matthew xxviii., 20.

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this city and *its* people and *its* discords, that you dare not explore the realm of Spirit, which is infinite, all space being peopled with God's embodied ideas? Follow me and I will show you the 'Way' you must *continue to walk* to enter the *Eternal* City, 'which hath foundations, whose builder and maker is God.'[1] 'The kingdom of God is within you,'[2] and through spiritual sense, you will find it. 'I am the way, the truth, and the life: no man cometh unto the Father, but by me,'[3] said Christ Jesus."

[1] Hebrews xi., 10.
[2] Luke xvii., 21.
[3] John xiv., 6.

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I replied: "Yes, my Leader and Teacher taught me that. I have followed her guidance and preached Truth to others, but I have never been asked to fly *above* this city and its people into vacuity."

The man replied: "Your Leader has bid you leave *all material sense* of things for Christ, Truth, and to have no other trust. Christ said to the rich man, 'Sell that thou hast, and give to the poor.'[1] The rich man clung to his riches, the phenomena of his material concepts, and 'went away sorrowful,' unwilling to trust Truth to give eternal Life."

[1] **Matthew xix., 21.**

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The man looked at me sorrowfully, reproachfully, and asked: "Do you love the things, objects, produced by material sense, which have beginning and end?"

I answered: "No, I am weary of them all. I denounce them, but should not something tangible remain, until spiritual objects appear?"

"You are not to *leave* the world," said the man, "but your *material sense* of the world. Two bodies cannot occupy the same space at the same time. You must part from the material, and trusting to Truth, you must wait until Spirit forms the divine concept, through

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which you perceive Principle and its idea, one God, one universe, the infinite manifestation of Life and Love, a universe peopled with perfect ideas, all children governed by the law of one Father-Mother God, Mind, Spirit. Look through the lens of spiritual sense *now* and behold the world of God's creating. Come into the spiritual aeroplane, and soar into the realm of Mind, and behold, as you rise, a new heaven and a new earth will dawn upon your enraptured vision. You will lose the false sense of man and the universe, and your spiritual sense will reveal a world teeming with life and love, a

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universe manifesting unchangeable Truth."

I asked if he were a Pilot.

"'Have I been so long time with you, and yet hast thou not known me?'[1] Do you sing, 'O gentle presence, peace and joy and power'[2] and not recognize the 'peace and joy and power' which God reflects through man?"

Then unhesitatingly I stepped into the aeroplane, feeling that he was indeed a Pilot, and we began to ascend.

After a few moments, I saw the city and its people faintly, and a

[1] John xiv., 9. [2] *Miscellaneous Writings*, page 389.

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sense of loss of tangible objects startled me, as nothing yet appeared in the air to take the place of dissolving views.

At this point, I ventured the query: "Is not this atmosphere highly rarefied?"

The Pilot smiled and said: "Yes, but you will soon become accustomed to Love's influence, the atmosphere of Spirit."

I felt strengthened by his assurance, and a quickened sense of safety took the place of fear. Gradually I began to see objects—trees and flowers and birds and people—but so dimly that they were like faint shad-

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ows. I remarked to the Pilot that we must be returning, for people and things were appearing.

Solemnly he said: "Look through the lens of spiritual sense and behold God's universe, peopled with spiritual ideas, all governed by the law of Life and Love. This spiritual world is disclosed only to spiritual sense. Keep your gaze steadfastly fixed on Christ, Truth, and you will reveal God's universe.

"A lie, claiming to have had power to create a universe and people it, thus to counterfeit God's universe, has been uncovered by Christ, at this his second appearing, and today the

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lie and the liars, the drunkards and the false accusers are cast down to the earth and their false objects are cast down with them. They have masqueraded as God's people; they have deceived the whole world; they are children of the wicked one. Fear, hatred, greed, envy, sensuality have begun to consume those false so-called men. The glory of God and His Christ, the immortal man of God's creating, is lighting the earth, causing the lie-man and the time-world to disappear forever. Do you comprehend?"

I replied: "I have been taught this by my revered Leader, Mrs. Eddy,

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and I have taught it to others. Why have I not *entirely* demonstrated out of a false mentality? Am I now leaving behind me the city of *material* sense? There, disease, suffering, sorrow, poverty, and death appeared. I constantly denied their reality and affirmed Truth. I put off false sense as fast as I could and struggled to love more and forgive every cruel wrong by making it unreal."

The Pilot questioned: "Have you *fulfilled* the law of Love? Until you do, fear will prevent you from rising higher into your spiritual consciousness, where Love restores the objects

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of God's creating. Do you wish to ascend or return? We cannot stand still."

I replied: "But I must *rise* and gain the *mastery* over what is left of undestroyed fear."

The Pilot said: "Then *rejoice* as you leave the city of dreams, and hope and faith and understanding will show you the God-crowned summit of perfect love."

At this point, I said: "You will not ask me to rise *alone* or leave me here to manage this aeroplane, about the piloting of which I know nothing?"

He looked reprovingly at me, and asked: "Have you not read, 'Lo,

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I am with you alway, even unto the end of the world' (of dreams)?"

I questioned: "But *you* are only a man. *Christ* said that. Can I trust *you?*"

Said the Pilot: "'He that hath seen me hath seen the Father.'[1] Look through the lens of spiritual sense, and as you rise, behold what *now* appears to you."

I looked and the air was filled with an innumerable host of people and objects, glorious to behold. They were active, joyous, and in perfect harmony, singing and rejoicing as they ascribed glory and honor and

[1] John xiv., 9.

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praise and power to God and to the Lamb.

As I gazed upon this startling revelation, I exclaimed: "How wonderful! Let me go back and tell my dear students and the world what a universe of life and light and beauty I have discovered."

The Pilot replied: "But you cannot go back. Have you not read: 'And I, if I be lifted up from the earth, will draw all men unto me'[1]? The 'Way' they know. *They* must *rise*, and looking through the lens of spiritual sense, they will fulfil the law of love to God and their brother

[1] John xii., 32.

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man, and there will be no separation between you and your students."

I remarked: "How glorious is this vision! How reluctantly I entered this ideal object in God's universe, called an aeroplane. We must be nearing the city that hath foundations, whose builder and maker is God."

The Pilot answered: "Yes, but it is the same city, people, and things. All you behold *now* has been revealed to you through spiritual sense. There has never been a material world, nor a material creator. A false claim, called a lie, or material sense, has been dissolved in the solvent of Love.

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False objects disappear to all who look through the lens of Spirit and all must finally rise to the summit of unselfed love.

"These are they who have come up through great tribulation. They have washed their robes white and are the redeemed of the Lord. You have seen the city of *God's* creating. Now from this elevation above human sense, take your spiritual 'dominion,' preach the gospel of Christ's power to silence the voice of the enemy of good. With the power of divine Love, cast the accuser of our brethren to the earth—nothingness—with its false generators and false

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generation. They will not be remembered nor come into Mind, for the objects of the false material senses will have disappeared forever."

Again I said: "Am I to go alone in this aeroplane? You referred me to Christ's promise, 'Lo, I am with you alway, even unto the end.'"

He replied: "Yes, and he will, for he is your real individual divine identity in God's image and likeness. Do you remember Christ said: 'I and my Father are one'[1]? You, God's idea, are inseparable from omnipotent Life and Love, and through you, His image and likeness, His

[1] John x., 30.

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word, He manifests Himself and executes His law. I have walked with you from the beginning, for we are members of the one Mind, God, Spirit, our Father-Mother, Life and Love. We are members of the body of Christ. We will never part. We have made our at-one-ment with Spirit. 'Spirit is infinite; therefore *Spirit is all.*' [1]

"Let us chant with the angelic choir:

"'Give us not only angels' songs,
But Science vast, to which belongs
The tongue of angels
And the song of songs.'[2]"

[1] *Miscellany*, page 357.
[2] Mary Baker Eddy.

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Will *you* my precious students come into my aeroplane with me? If you look through the lens of spiritual sense, you will see there is plenty of room for you all. Let us sing with the Spirit as we rise and behold God in the face of each brother and sister, and with Christ Jesus and Christ Mary, the compound idea, we will fly to heights of peace and joy and spiritual power.

As we rise, let us voice the praises of the King of kings and Lord of lords, whose government was, is, and ever will be the law of eternal Life and Love.

Are we seated?

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Our beloved Leader says, "Spirit, God, is heard when the senses are silent." [1]

Listen,—as we ascend and sing:

THE SONG OF THE FLIER

Ho! for the purr of the aeroplane motor,
Ho! for the life of fliers so free!
Joy of the airman no mortal can measure,
Taking dominion o'er land and o'er sea!
Come ye and fly with me,
Rouse ye and vie with me,
Rest on the firmament, rising with me!

Is there a storm on the earth that is raging?
Bravely my aeroplane mounts to the skies!
Riding the whirlwind I'm girded with power;

[1] *Science and Health*, page 89.

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Turbulent currents my spirit defies!
Storm-clouds I'm tethering,
Tempests I'm weathering,
Earth drops away as I rise, as I rise!

Upward and onward, beyond the horizon,
Swiftly, so swiftly, I move on my way.
Carrying tidings of import momentous,
Telling of liberty won in the fray!
Tidings so glorious,
Justice victorious,
Heavenly visions I'm seeing today!

This poem, which inspired my vision, was written by my dear student Miss Caroline M. Timpson.

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Kentucky State Normal College,
Bowling Green, Ky.,
June 3, 1919.

MRS. AUGUSTA E. STETSON, C. S. D.,
New York City.

Beloved teacher:

Your beautiful and attractive book, "My Spiritual Aeroplane," came in due time, but owing to my absence from the city, I received it only a day or two ago. Words are wholly inadequate to express the feeling of gratitude and appreciation that welled up in my heart, consciousness, when I read the same. It is indeed a veritable thesaurus of spiritual knowledge, a genuine and trustworthy guide to the attainment of spiritual "peace and joy and power."[1]

The book is fine, superb; indeed it is simplicity's self. You have certainly given the field food for thought, expressed in simple and inspirational language. You have expressed yourself so clearly and concisely, yet, at the same time, so emphatically and scientifically that people, the world over, are unconsciously and without deliberate

[1] *Poems*, Mary Baker Eddy, page 4.

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mental effort, digesting, assimilating, and understanding the deep internal meaning of the spiritual reality concealed behind the mere material symbolism with regard to the Aeroplane in its ascension from sense to Soul.

The spiritually minded know that you have been rising heavenward in the Aeroplane of Spirit for many years, but the materially minded and the inhabitants of the material world have been utterly oblivious to this spiritual ascension above material conditions, owing to their blindness to man's divine nature as God's reflected entity.

It is true you have never been separated from the spiritual leadership of Mrs. Eddy's divine ego, and this at-one-ment with her "gentle presence,"[1] together with your continuous and instant recognition of her mental touch and consequent response thereto, has enabled you to rise higher in the demonstration of divine Love than any other Christian Scientist. The field soener or later must recognize this fact since Truth cannot remain forever concealed behind a lie, the mask of personal sense.

Thus far, I have not been separated from the divine guidance and spiritual influence of your

[1] *Poems*, Mary Baker Eddy, page 4.

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impersonal identity, God's idea, and I pray daily, hourly, that I may not be. By following your spiritual teaching and example, I am adhering to the present highest visible idea of Love, and cannot be separated from our Beloved Leader known to the world as Mary Baker Eddy.

The peoples of the entire world must ultimately realize that you are "safe above life's raging sea" of tempest-tossed human concepts. They must recognize that Christ is the Pilot of your Spiritual Aeroplane, and come into it in order to find surcease from the discordant and destructive phenomena of etherial vibrations, false, illusive, material thoughts. The truth is that your Spiritual Aeroplane has never been out of the "secret place of the most High," the "atmosphere of Love," but to mortal sense it appears to be in a material world, battling against the adverse winds of error, rising by degrees towards the zenith of spiritual dominion.

Several have expressed a desire to secure a copy of your book, "My Spiritual Aeroplane" and would like to know the price. Kindly notify me and I will inform them.

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With renewed assurances of my desire and purpose to continue in the upward flight from sense to Soul in the Spiritual Aeroplane in which you are soaring and which must, will, in the fullness of time, or at the expiration of time, reach the goal of immortality, eternal Life, the demonstration of absolute Science, I am,

Your affectionate student,

ROY HOLLAND SEWARD.

From *The New York Evening Post*, June 7, 1919

"My Spiritual Aeroplane"

A beautifully made little book is Augusta E. Stetson's "My Spiritual Aeroplane" (Putnam). First read a few weeks ago at the rehearsal of The Oratorio Society of the New York City Christian Science Institute at Carnegie Chamber Music Hall, it appears now in this attractive and convenient form. The spirit and purport of the allegory may be best expressed in the concluding sentence of the foreword: "The reader will readily grasp that the

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Pilot of the aeroplane was the spiritual idea known to Christian Scientists as their great Leader, Mary Baker Eddy, from whom, at Mrs. Eddy's request, Mrs. Stetson, in her journey from sense to Soul, has never been separated." The essence of Christian Science is contained in the few pages of the booklet, the dialogue being excellently adapted for making distinctions clear. It closes with a poem, which Mrs. Stetson credits with inspiring her vision, by Miss Caroline M. Timpson, entitled "The Song of the Flier." The opening stanza runs:

Ho! for the purr of the aeroplane motor,
Ho! for the life of fliers so free!
Joy of the airman no mortal can measure,
Taking dominion o'er land and o'er sea!
Come ye and fly with me,
Rouse ye and vie with me,
Rest on the firmament, rising with me!

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